361 tornadoes in the rainy season, is another ecological consideration.

591 [521] The hamlet is always a kinship unit, usually patrilocal and patrilineal. When a young man marries, his father will give him a cow or two, as he will to his daughter. But only the son will receive the use of part of his father's rented (or owned) fields to support his new family. Thus he will usually build his hut near his father's, father's brother's, and paternal grandfather's. In exceptional cases, when no land is available at his father's, the bridegroom may agree to establish himself at his wife's hamlet, but this is rare since the feeling is that he will always remain a subjugated, barely tolerated, henpecked and ill-treated figure. A proud Amhara male, even a "gabbar" (peasant ex-serf), would not agree to such a condition and insists on patriarchal status at least within his own biological family of creation. He would much rather continue to obey his father than his new father-in-law. [606] Consanguinal kinship feelings are so strong that it is a common assumption that no in-law could really mean well and be unselfishly well-disposed to the newcomer. Only when warfare has killed off the adult males in a hamlet, male inlaws move in.

592 Each hut is inhabited by a biological family, usually father and mother, about three children who have survived infant mortality, and perhaps an aged parent or old, widowed kinswoman of the husband's.

602 Patrilineal kinship relations are often related also to administrative considerations. On church-owned land, the peasants who live on the hillside below the church, who

601 Cousins are simply addressed and referred to as "uncle's child" or "aunt's child", and there is no terminological difference between paternal and maternal uncles. But the informal terms mentioned above are extended to these consanguineal kinfolk for special emphasis of endearment, respect and protection. For the latter, the address "gashey" is used commonly, and a rarer, more poetic and somewhat archaic term of address would be "ambayē" (my mountain fortress).

Familiarities, teasing or endearing, in address to siblings include "abäba" (flower) for endearment to an elder girl (sister); "anchi" (Thou, feminine) in teasing address of a girl to a younger, male sibling, otherwise considered an insult; "antä", (thou, male), in teasing address to a younger sister.

B. Affinal Kin ("amachenät") and Residence.

606 574 Affinal relatives, especially the male ego's parents-in-law, must also be visited regularly, at least once every two months in the dry season, or, if they reside too far away, at least twice a year. Gifts, (e.g. a fat sheep) must be brought, and hospitality and a feast can be expected in turn.

606 In popular Amhara opinion, the affinal villain is not so much the mother-in-law, as the step-mother-in-law. Both are addressed respectfully as "amatey" (lit. my elder mother). But it is believed that a mother, desiring her daughter to be happy in marriage, will

606 instruct her to be a good wife; while a stepmother is assumed to have no such desire, and is likely to tell her stepdaughter not to"make so much fuss"over her husband. If the latter were to follow such advice, she would soon be criticized by her husband's parents whose residential hamlet she usually shares. Stepmothers are very common due to the frequency of divorce and the shorter lifespan of women.

606 628 Affinal relatives are expected to come to a person's aid if he becomes involved in a blood feud, particularly if his consanguinal kin are few or weak. Since there is no pattern of individual duelling, even distant kin become involved readily, as a point of honor.

591 Residence of male persons is usually patrilocal-patrilineal, i.e. in the consanguinal line. But if a young bridegroom finds that his own father has little good land to allocate him in his parental hamlet upon his marriage, he may elect to seek better facilities by establishing residence at the bride's patrilocal hamlet. She is usually very happy about this latter residence, for her kin will protect her even if she wrongs her husband (e.g. by taking a lover in subsequent years). Conversely, thehusband tries to avoid such a situation, for reasons of happiness as well as prestige.

585 [571] Three-day visiting is the pattern in kin visiting, for it usually takes one day for initial greetings and exchange of news, slaughtering and preparation of a sheep; a second day for feasting and talks with the neighbors; a third day for preparation of leave-taking.

After one week, the "dass" are torn down. A "great man" who is father of the bride, will usually send his daughter several donkeyloads of household staples, including lentils ("shure"), peas cooked with salt, pepper, and spices, so that she will be honored and well treated by the women under whose jurisdiction she has come. Then, after a month, he will send a messenger to ask how she is habituated to the new life. If the reply is favorable, another load of grain, butter, spices, flaxseed oil are sent.

512 The adjustment of the bride may not be easy. The night she leaves her parental roof, she takes with her, besides her skin-mat, a little basket of dyed reeds, containing her personal little distaff, spindle, and glass necklace used in scouring pottery. After a week or a few weeks of honeymoon, she is expected to participate in the women's household tasks: fetching water and fuel, baking "enjära" daily for her husband, cooking "wot", to her husband's tastes, crushing barley, grinding "tyëff", brewing beer. If she complains too soon, the womenfolk will quote the proverb:

[539]

"Hardly arrived have you, young bride,
(but) already you crunch shembera (peas)"
(meaning: lazily pick at peas, instead of
doing the regular, harder work).

606 [591] The couple is expected to remain in patrilocal residence at least a year, so that the bride can be taught, by her mother-in-law, how

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

606 to be a "good wife", to do "everything right", to learn what her husband likes. If she does not obey her mother-in-law, she is criticized as "rude", and the women say that the groom will "divorce her soon".

423 596 After the marriage, and especially after she bears children, a wife is regarded as a charter member of her husband's "byet" (lit. house), his family of procreation, continuing his patrilineal kinship unit, regardless of whether they move to residence elsewhere or not. Nevertheless, it is the "byet" that is the landholding unit among most "rest"-owning Amhara, and each biological unit within it receives an allocation of land for usufruct; the limit of one able-bodied plowman is regarded as 5-10 "qada". Thus, the biological family of procreation does not own land, nor does it control it, until, with the death of elders and advancing age, it becomes the "family of orientation" to which a succeeding generation must give obedience.

596 422 Meanwhile, however, the biological family unit does own the cattle and other mobile goods with which they started their married life, and the increase therefrom. This gives them some partial economic independence.

[731] 423 166 361 When, due to war, epidemics (e.g. malaria), or famine (erosion), a "byet" decides to abandon, for the time being, the ancestral lands, and migrates to another district, it usually huddles together in one or a minimum of residential hamlets, sometimes for several generations, until times are better. Then it buds off so rapidly that soon only a few huts remain on the location of the original hamlet of refuge. Thereupon kinsmen may claim "betäña" rights of usufruct from more distant kinfolk who had remained be-

e) Visiting

574 602 Visiting kinfolk regularly, during the nine months of the dry season, is a prime requirement. This includes, in this order of emphasis and frequency: patrilineal kin, matrilineal kin, affinal kin.

574 606 Visits to affinal kin are less frequent and more formal. When visiting one's parents-in-law, usually twice during the dry season, the man is not supposed to come empty-handed, but should bring a sheep as a gift. He waits outside the in-law hamlet, just beyond the thornbush enclosure, and asks the children whether his father-in-law is at home. When the latter appears, the visitor enters and approaches the hut. He enters only upon invitation. There is no mother-in-law avoidance as such, but contact is reduced to a minimum, between son-in-law and mother-in-law, to achieve maximum privacy for both.

602 Flouting kinship obligation is regarded as a shameful deviation, indicating an evil character. Kinship relations represent much security for the individual, but also involve him in serious obligations, such as aiding kinsmen in blood-feuds and reprisal-raids ("baqqal"). A person who wanders away from the kin hamlet, or from kin obligations, when his mood or irresponsibility carry him, is called "lage" (after the soft reed that grows rapidly at the least rain, but drops when grown to maturity).

574 764 Visitors, particularly strangers, must observe certain taboos, lest they be suspected of bringing the evil eye. They should not ask the number of children, nor praise their health or good looks aloud. This is considered dangerous, because the "boda" spirit is always on the lookout for fat, juicy children so that he can magically "drink [764] their blood" and make them waste away. (Children are vulnerable to many communicable diseases).

574 576 When visiting the sick, the visitor, especially female visitors, are expected to express their sympathy in unmistakeable tones. The

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

For the groom, too, marriage means a gratifying boost toward adult status, symbolized by his receiving from the bride's parents distinctively adult male possessions—a *kutā*, perhaps a *barnos*, and a rifle if they can afford it.

Such is the basic pattern of betrothal and marriage among the Amhara, though many of the details vary from province to province.[6] There are, in addition, certain traditional alternatives to this standard procedure. One of these involves the solemnization of the marriage oath by taking Communion, a rite necessary for a marriage to be counted as legal by the Church, and followed by the ordained clergy and the most pious families. Another form requires no oath at all; the husband is simply expected to provide a salary and clothes for his wife. This procedure is followed chiefly by soldiers and traders, and by those who are marrying for the second time.

Still another type of marriage is that known as *qoṭ aṣir* ("ten beds") in which the boy goes to live with the girl's family while both are quite young. In this case the boy has his work apprenticeship under the girl's father. After several years, when the girl reaches puberty, a second wedding ceremony will take place—this time at the home of the groom's parents—and the union will be consummated. This type of arrangement tends to be made when the boy's family is too poor to provide enough to get him started on his own, or if the girl's father has no son to help him with the work.

There is, finally, a form of marriage by abduction. If the girl's father does not grant the request of the emissaries of the boy's father, and if the boy's father is still interested, the boy may go with two or three friends to capture her when she is on the way to market or fetching water. When this happens, the couple will approach the girl's parents after they have been married for some time and seek a reconciliation. Occasionally poor families have deliberate recourse to this form of marriage, arranging in advance a bride capture so as to avoid having to prepare the expensive wedding feasts.[7]

Although marriage marks the termination of childhood for the Amhara, it does not by itself signify the full attainment of adulthood. The newly wed couple lives at first in the home of the boy's father, and to truly "arrive" they must establish their own separate household. If the boy's family is wealthy, he may have his own house ready by the time of the wedding. More often, the couple spends a certain amount of time—a few months, or in some cases as much as two or three years—living in the home of the groom's father until their own house is built. To tarry unduly in the father's house, however, is considered a mark of laziness and a great shame.

Furthermore, because of the somewhat arbitrary manner in which the spouses are chosen for each other, there is often a serious problem of post-marital adjustment, a problem not rendered any less difficult by the proximity of the girl's mother-in-law. The divorce pattern is well known among